

the seventeenth century, under the influence of Laud's regime, the murmur was threatening to become a hurricane. Then came the Long Parliament, the fierce denunciations in both Houses of the interference of the clergy in civil affairs, and the legislation abolishing the Court of High Commission, depriving the ordinary ecclesiastical courts of penal jurisdiction, and finally, with the abolition of episcopacy, sweeping them away altogether.

"Not many good days," wrote Penn, "since ministers meddled so much in laymen's business!"¹¹

That sentiment was a dogma on which, after the Restoration, both Cavalier and Roundhead could agree.

It inevitably reacted, not only upon the practical powers of the clergy, which in any case had long been feeble, but on the whole conception of religion which regarded it as involving the control of economic self-interest by what Laud had called "the body of the Church."

The works of Sanderson and of Jeremy Taylor, continuing an earlier tradition, reasserted with force and eloquence the view that the Christian is bound by his faith to a rule of life which finds expression in equity in bargaining and in works of mercy to his neighbours.⁸⁴

But the conception that the Church possessed, of its own authority, an independent standard of social values, which it could apply as a criterion to the practi-

cal affairs of the economic world, grew steadily weaker. "The result, neither immediate nor intended, but inevitable, was the tacit denial of spiritual significance in the transactions of business and in the relations of organized society. Repudiating the right of religion to advance any social theory distinctively its own, that attitude became itself the most tyrannical and paralysing of theories. It may be called Indifferentism. The change had begun before the Civil War. It was completed with the Restoration, and, still more, with the Revolution. In the eighteenth century it is almost superfluous to examine the teaching of the Church of